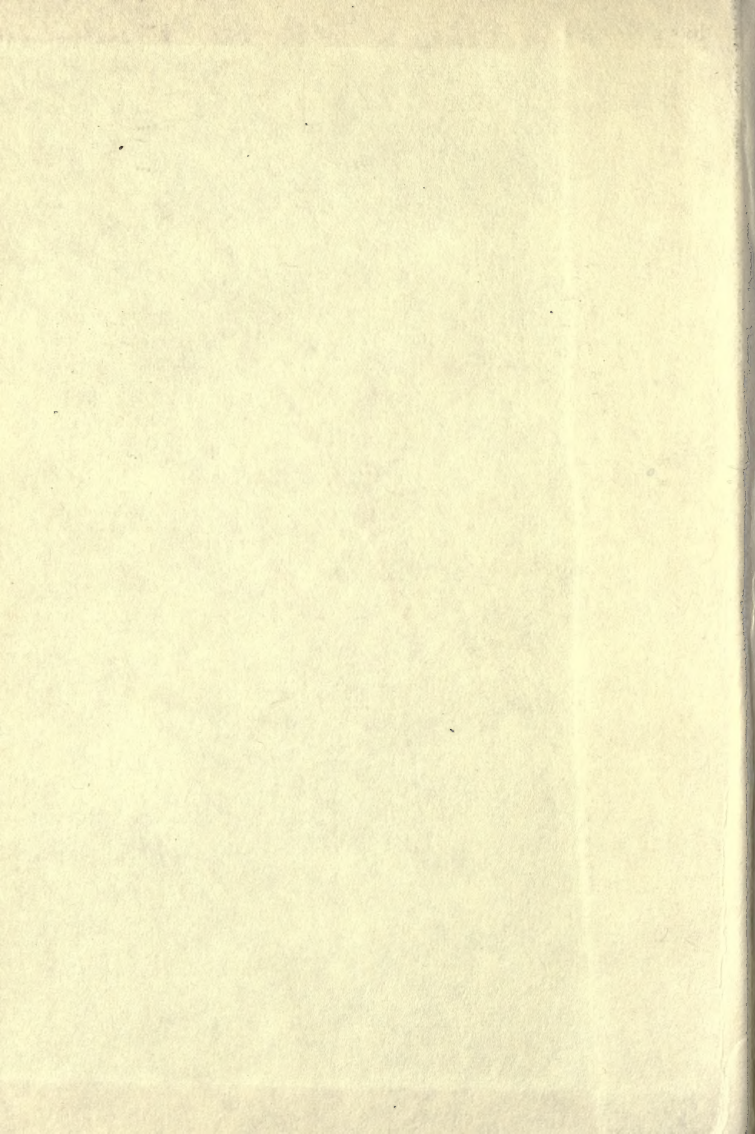


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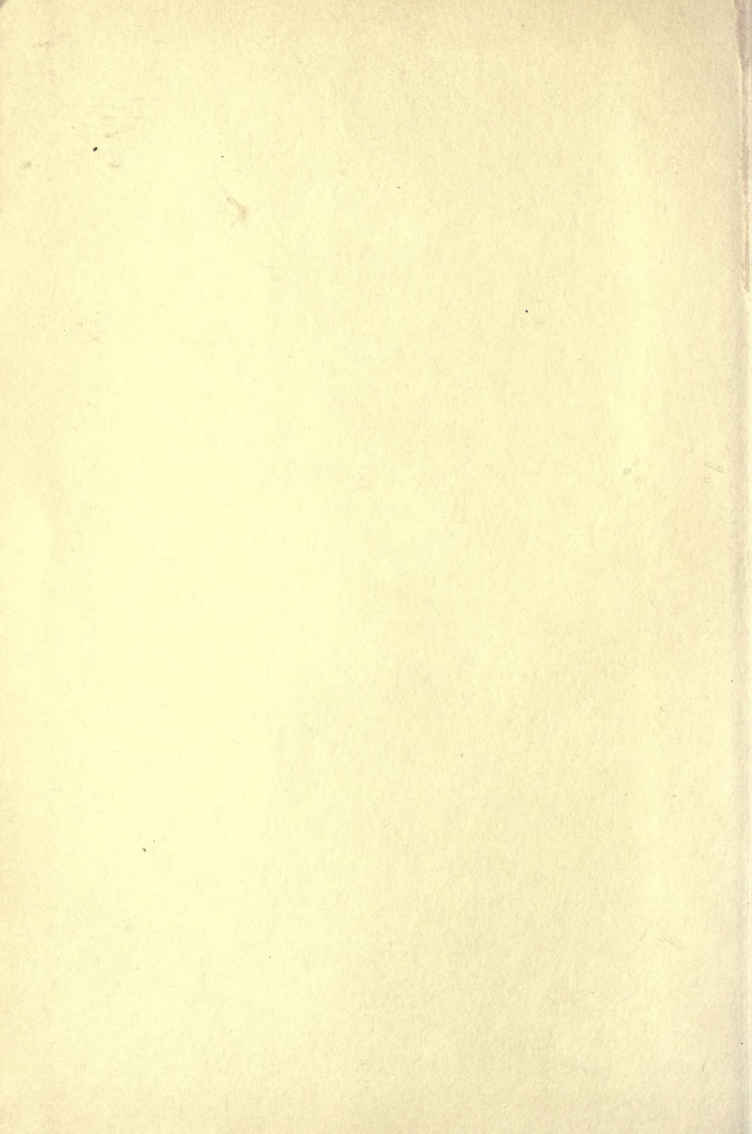
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OF ART MONOGRAPHS

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## PREFACE

THE following essay is, so far as its facts go, necessarily a compilation from the works of other writers, European and Japanese. Of the former the chief are the charming treatise by M. E. de Goncourt, and the exhaustive monograph by M. Revon—the latter, by far the most complete and exhaustive examination of the subject which has yet appeared, either in Europe or Japan. Other authors to whom the present writer is greatly indebted are, the late Professor Anderson and M. Gonse, Professor C. J. Holmes, MM. Bing and Hayashi, Mr. F. V. Dickins; while the translations of Messrs. Kowaki, Minakata and R. Kohitsu have been of inestimable value. There still exists much misapprehension as to the place in art of Hokusai; and to assist in a right understanding of this, and at the same time to interest the ever increasing public which cares for works of beauty and for the men who made them, has been the only aim of this small book.

EDWARD F. STRANGE

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM,

*September, 1906*





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## CHAPTER I

### THE LIFE OF THE ARTIST

**T**HE private life of a great artist may or may not be of account in the estimation of his public work. In the case of Hokusai, not the least tribute to his greatness is that no single fact that has yet been disinterred, relating to the story and the manner of his living, can be disassociated from the practice of his art. For that, alone, he employed every moment of his many days ; and for that alone, when the end came, did he desire that years might have been added unto him.

Hokusai was born in the Honjō quarter of Yedo, in the ninth month of the tenth year of the period Horeki (*i.e.*, October–November 1760) ; as stated by himself on a drawing of the deity Daikoku, in the possession of the bookseller, Kobayashi. He

was the son of an artisan—a maker of mirrors—Nakajima Issai. His family name was Nakamura Hachiyemon; the first of which appellations having, very probably, been derived from those of his real father and of another artisan who is said to have adopted him—Kawamura Ichiroyemon. Hokusai always claimed to have descended on his mother's side from one of the retainers of Kira, who was killed in the defence of his lord by the Forty-Seven Rōnin, an episode which supplied the subject for one of his best-known series of colour-prints. ✓ Another of his many names, Katsushika, was derived from the quarter of the city in which he lived.

He was an eldest son, as shown by his name, Tokitarō (first-born son); and is related to have shown great intelligence even as a boy. At the age of thirteen or fourteen years, he began his apprenticeship to an engraver; an occupation which, though it only lasted until about the year 1778, can hardly fail to have played its part in the technical development of the artist. He is related to have worked also in the service of the keeper of a lending library; and thus to have been inspired to the career of an illustrator of books. Whether this latter story be true or not, there are substantial and authentic



evidences of the other ; for some of his woodcuts have been identified. During this time he took the name Tetsuzō.

At the age of eighteen, he undertook the first definite step towards the adoption of an artist's career, by entering the studio—or perhaps it were better to say, the workshop—of Katsukawa Shunshō, one of the most able of the painters of the Popular School, who devoted himself mainly to the production of colour-prints. In a very little time he perfected himself so thoroughly in the style of this artist as to receive from him the customary token of recognition of the progress of a pupil—permission to adopt a name based on that of his master ; and his work was accordingly signed, for a brief period, Katsugawa Shunrō. During this time he also illustrated several books of a humorous nature.

His character, however, was too independent to be trammelled for long with the mannerisms of any single style. He soon exhausted the narrow conventions of the Ukiyoye, and turned his attention, by an easy and natural transition, to those of that school of Japanese painting which was most nearly allied therewith—the Kano. In the eyes of Shunshō, this defection must have seemed to be

something almost amounting to treachery. Hokusai was summarily expelled, and forbidden to use the name Katsugawa. Almost immediately after this event, another incident happened. Hokusai had made a sign—a poster, one would say—for a picture-dealer, in his newly adopted style. It was seen by Shunkō, the favourite and most successful pupil of Shunshō, who, reproaching the shopkeeper for daring to exhibit to the world so bad a piece of work, tore it to pieces before the very eyes of Hokusai. The latter recognised the justness of the criticism. He made no protest ; but, when very old, said one day to a friend : “ If Shunkō had not insulted me, I should never have become a great draughtsman.”

He now (A.D. 1785) devoted himself mainly to book illustration ; using, successively, the names Sōnō Shunrō and Goummatei. In 1787 he was attracted by the style of Sōri, an almost contemporary painter, with some affinities both to the Tosa School and to that of Kōrin, the great designer ; and, for a while, again changed his artist name to that of Hishigawa Sōri (A.D. 1787). But these wanderings so seriously imperilled his livelihood, that for a while he had to abandon his profession and earn a bare subsistence by hawking such small

goods as calendars and red pepper about the streets. One day, when thus employed, he saw his old master, Shunshō, approaching ; but, for shame to be seen in such a condition, avoided him in the crowd. In this poverty he lived until the spring of the next year, when he received an unexpected commission to paint an image of Shōki, the Demon-queller, on a banner for the great Festival of Boys, which always takes place on the fifth day of the fifth month. For this he received two *ryo* of gold—a sum that raised him at once to comparative affluence. His spirits revived ; and he made a vow henceforth to devote his whole life to art. From this time (A.D. 1789) begins that extraordinary and unfailing industry which characterised him to the day of his death.

In this year also he formed one of his most notable connections—that with the great novelist Bakin, several of whose works he illustrated ; and within a few years had established his reputation as a painter so well that he was selected, with others, by the artist Kano Yusen to assist in the restoration of the temple at Nikko. On the way he had to submit to another hard lesson. To please the keeper of an inn at which the party rested, Yusen



made a sketch of a boy knocking down fruit from a tree with a bamboo pole. Hokusai, examining it, must needs say to one of his companions that the master ought to have had a better idea of drawing; for, although the pole reached far above the fruit, he had drawn the boy standing on tip-toe. Yusen heard the criticism. He, in great anger, soundly rated Hokusai for not having seen that the intention was to represent a clumsy boy, and forthwith dismissed him. Hokusai returned to Yedo and carried his studies a stage further by working at the styles of Tōrin and Hiroyuki, of the Tosa school; then that of Shiba Kokan, to whom he was indebted for some outline of European methods learned by Kokan at Nagasaki; and, finally, of the great Chinese painters of the Ming Dynasty. On bases so broad did he build the inimitable manner of his mature life.

For to none of these styles did he adhere, even for a short time. In 1799 he adopted a new manner, and signalled the fact by taking a name, in which that by which he is best known now first appears. The appellation Hokusai Shinsei is derived from words meaning "Star of the northern constellation" (the Great Bear), and it was chosen

in reference to the deity Myōken, for whom the artist had a special veneration. A little while after, however, a narrow escape from being struck by lightning caused the name Shinsei to be given to a disciple, in order to make way for those of Raito and Raishin, both allied with the word *rai*, "lightning."

At this time Hokusai's reputation began to spread, and he had a particular success among the Dutch merchants, who were then allowed to trade at Nagasaki, and, at intervals, to visit Yedo. In this connection occurred a famous episode, which is worth repeating for the sake of the light it throws upon the artist's personal character. A Dutch captain commissioned him to paint two *makimono* (rolls), representing typical scenes in the lives of a Japanese man and woman respectively, at a price agreed upon, and the ship's doctor ordered two similar works. After a few days the rolls were delivered to the captain, who paid without demur; but the doctor, on receiving his, endeavoured to beat the artist down, pleading poverty. Hokusai was then, as usual, in severe straits for money, but he was too proud to endure such treatment, and refused to part with his work for less than the

stipulated reward. When he returned home his wife reproached him with not having sold the drawings for what they would fetch, seeing that in Japan they would be of little value and no one would buy them. But he replied that, in dealing with a foreigner, it was especially necessary to keep to the terms of his bargain, lest it should be thought that a Japanese said one thing and meant another. When the captain heard of the incident he at once purchased the second pair of rolls himself ; and, the report spreading, it is said that the Dutch bought Hokusai's drawings by hundreds and sent them home to Holland, until the Shogun's Government, fearing that the secrets of the defences of the country might by this means be revealed, forbade the traffic. None of these drawings have yet been authentically identified. If any could be traced, they would be of almost inestimable value.

In 1804 Hokusai made the first of those gigantic *tours de force* of which the report had been handed down to us, on the occasion of a temple festival on the fourteenth day of the fourth month : a huge figure of Dharma, painted with enormous brushes from veritable casks of Indian ink on such a scale that the design could only be realised by those who



mounted, with ladders, to the temple roof. This and similar exercises impressed the imagination of the multitude, and gained for the artist such general fame that he was even ordered to display his powers before the Shogun Iyenari in a sort of competition with Bunchō. After drawing a number of ordinary themes—flowers, birds, landscapes, and the like—Hokusai again prepared a great roll of paper, and with a brush or, one might say, broom, traced thereon the curves of a mighty river. Then, dipping the feet of a cock in orange-red, he allowed the bird to walk over his design, and so brought to the mind of all his beholders the famous river Tatsuta, with maple leaves of autumn floating on its stream. Bunchō acknowledged himself vanquished, and henceforth the fame of Hokusai was established in the eyes of the people.

In 1807 began a curious and intermittent connection with the great novelist Bakin, an intercourse varied with many quarrels. And in 1810 Hokusai found himself at variance with another popular idol, the actor Onoye Baiko. The latter was famous for his power of representing ghosts ; and asked—somewhat peremptorily, one imagines—Hokusai to make a drawing for him of a special kind of phantom.

Hokusai, feeling probably the contempt for the actor class which inspired even the lower orders of artisans in Old Japan, and possibly offended by the form of the request, made no reply to the invitation. The actor thereupon went to the artist's house in some state ; and having entered the poor and barely furnished room in which Hokusai was working, ostentatiously spread a mat for himself to sit upon, before beginning the conversation. Hokusai treated his visitor with contemptuous indifference ; utterly ignoring his presence. After vain efforts to induce him to speak, Baiko withdrew, angry and humiliated : but eventually made the most complete apology and was forgiven.

Some few years afterwards occurred that visit to Nagoya which produced the *Mangwa* (see chapter ii. for an examination into the precise date) ; and this was followed by journeys to Kishiu (about the year 1823), Ōsaka, and the capital of the Mikado, Kyōto, where his reception seems to have been anything but enthusiastic. He then returned to Yedo, where he worked steadily without incident, except for a severe attack of paralysis (about the year 1828 or 1829) ; which, however, he got the better of. In 1831-1832, he made yet another excursion to

Shinano, and stayed for a whole year with one of his admirers, a rich wine merchant ; and in 1834 or 1835 he betook himself to Uruga, living in concealment, for some reason unknown, under the name of Myuraya Hachiyemon : during which he wrote some pathetic letters, preserved, fortunately, in the *Katsushika Hokusai Den*. He returned to Yedo in the autumn of 1836 during a period of famine ; and, for a while was able to maintain himself only by the most untiring industry, exchanging his drawings for small portions of rice ; even, for the same reward, turning casual strokes made by his customers on silk and brought to him for the purpose, into finished designs undreamt of by their originators. And so he survived ; only, in 1839—in the seventy-ninth year of his age—to experience yet another misfortune. In this year, his house was burnt down ; and he lost, not merely his possessions in the ordinary sense of the word, but a priceless accumulation of studies, preserved since the days of his early youth. His very brushes were destroyed. But such was his indomitable energy that he hired another dwelling on credit ; and with bowl and painting-slabs, extemporised from the fragments of a broken bottle found in the

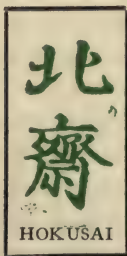
ruins of his old house, set himself again to work with a veritable rage of enthusiasm.

In 1848, he changed his dwelling for the last of many times—his habit of moving being a standing joke with his friends—and left the Honjō quarter for a house near the monastery of Enshō in the Asakusa quarter of Yedo. He fell ill in the spring of the following year ; and the case soon became hopeless. His pupils and friends gathered around the old man ; and did all in their power to ease his last moments ; but the desire of life was strong, and even after all the troubles he had undergone he could not leave his art without regret. “If only Heaven could have lent me ten more years,” he sighed ; and then, “if Heaven had lent me but five years more, I should have become a true painter.” These were his last words.

He died on the 18th day of the ninth month of the second year of Kayei (May 10, 1849). His simple funeral was yet followed by several daimyō with their retainers, as well as by a great crowd of pupils and friends, to the astonishment and envy of his neighbours. He was buried in the monastery or Sekiyōgi, in the Honjō quarter of Yedo ; and received the Buddhist name of Shinshi—Man of



Sincerity. His tombstone is still there, in the third row on the left of the entrance : inscribed "Tomb of Gwakyō Rōjin Manji, of the family or Sawamura," "Hokusai, of the province of Shimosa, famous artist, honest man" and his many other names, and a poem. And there, amid the humble monuments of artisan and trader, such men as those with whom his life was lived, lies the body of one of the greatest artists the world has ever seen.



## CHAPTER II

### THE "MANGWA"

OF all the works of Hokusai perhaps none is more widely known, or has been received with more general appreciation, than his wonderful encyclopædia of Japanese life, *Hokusai Mangwa*. It consists, in all, of fifteen volumes of woodcut reproductions of sketches, drawn with the most amazing freedom, imagination and directness, and lightly tinted. The title was chosen by the master himself; and its meaning is, in this connection, simply, "rapid sketches"—or more fully, "drawing as it comes spontaneously." The writer of the preface to the fourth volume classifies pictorial art as consisting either of *gwa* (sketches), *zu* (pictures) and *utsushi* (exact copies); and quotes this saying of Hokusai, "There is a saying of the ancients to the following effect:

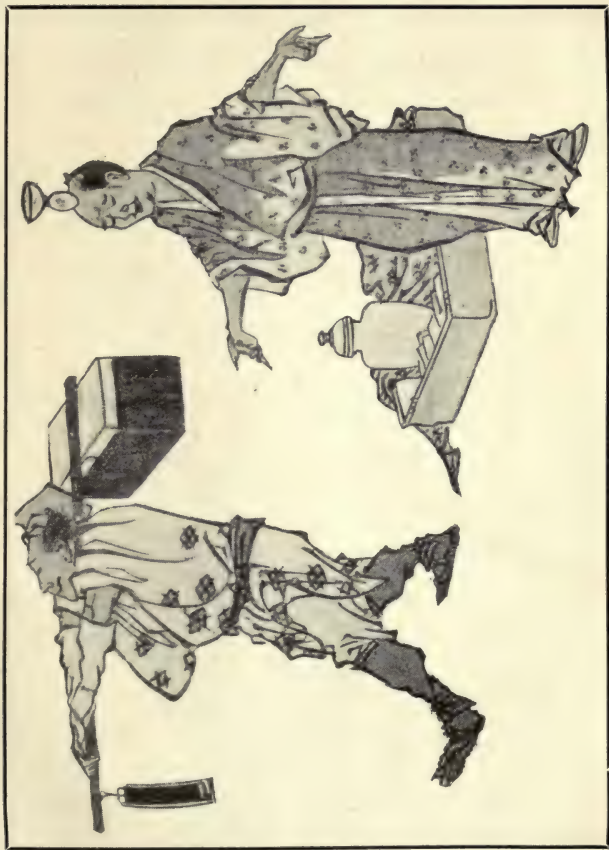
'who cannot stand cannot walk, who cannot walk cannot run.' Now, to stand is *shin* (to copy faithfully), to walk is *gyo* (to picture), to run is *so* (dash off a rapid sketch)."

The *Mangwa* owed its inception to a visit paid by Hokusai to Nagoya, where he stayed in the house of Honshu Keijin, the writer of the preface to the first volume ; and there made the acquaintance of Gekkwōtei Bokusen, "to the great delight of both." Over three hundred sketches were made as illustrations of his theory of art—"nothing in Nature was unattempted"—and on a foundation so broad was his great achievement reared. Each volume has its own preface, written by some admirer and personal friend, one would conclude, or the artist ; and from these we are able to gather invaluable hints as to the impression made on the minds of his contemporaries. Several of the writers were authors : Rokujuyen, a humorous poet—who, however, has given us nothing farcical ; Shokusarjin, also a poet—"a teetotaller loving cakes, and hating liquor" ; Shikitei Samba, a novelist ; Ryūtei Tanehiko, the author of a series of short stories of the "Hundred and Eight Chinese Heroes," illustrated by Hokusai's pupil, Hokkei, and

of other works ; and Sankin Gwaishi Ogasa, perhaps another name of the novelist, Bakin—who wrote his preface “by lamplight, at a window looking out on a rainy night.” Then we have also, Hōzan Gyo-ō Shiki, “the sage old angler” ; “the old man “Shurodai” ; the old gentleman “Hya-kushu.” Most of them refer pleasantly to their age ; and we may form a suggestive picture of a *coterie* of simple-minded, wise, enthusiastic old men, dominated by the impulsive, masterful, difficult artist, himself at the beginning of the period being well over fifty years : a good age for Japan.

The actual date on which the *Mangwa* was begun is a matter of some doubt. The preface to the first volume is dated precisely, tenth month of the ninth year of Bunkwa (December 1812) ; which would appear conclusive enough, and has been accepted as final by such authorities as M. E. de Goncourt and Mr. F. V. Dickins. But the principal Japanese life of Hokusai, on the other hand, states with equal assurance that the work was begun in the course of a visit which Hokusai paid to his friend and pupil Bokusen, in 1817, at Nagoya ; and though Mr. Dickins dismisses this as an error, M. Revon not only accepts it as authentic,





A STREET JUGGLER AND A PORTER



but has found what he considers to be ample corroboration of the later year, in the autumn of which he believes the book to have made its first appearance. A third date, 1810, given by some European writers, rests on no evidence at all; and a fourth, Bunkwa 11 (A.D. 1814-15), on that of a statement of the editor of the fifteenth volume, published in 1878; and is certainly inaccurate. In favour of the ascription of the work to the year 1812, some importance may be attached to two facts, not hitherto brought into the argument by any writer on the subject. First, that the date of the *tenth* volume, tenth month of Bunsei 10 (A.D. 1819), has never been questioned; and bears on its face every impress of truth, in the characteristic appropriation of a series of tens for a notable and auspicious achievement. Now, in the preface to volume v., a passage occurs which has thus been translated by Mr. Dickins (*Japan Society's Transactions*, vol. vi. part iii.): "These 'random sketches' . . . have for some time past, owing to the favour with which the earlier ones were received, been engraved and published *year after year*, and *the present one is the fifth of the series*. . . ." The expression which I have italicised would hardly

have been used if the "series" had begun only in 1817; especially when time enough for the appearance of yet another five volumes had to be allowed before 1819. M. de Goncourt considered that volume ii. was issued in 1814; the third in 1815; five volumes in 1816; and the ninth and tenth in 1819; an estimate which is perhaps nearly enough reliable as far as the earlier volumes are concerned. But there is no evidence in the prefaces of so remarkable a fact as the production of five volumes in any one year; while, on the other hand, those of numbers six, eight, and nine, each suggest strongly the idea of a series appearing at nearly regular intervals.

The second point against the date 1817 is its association with Bokusen. This artist, in 1815, published a work entitled, *Bokusen Sogwa* (Sketches from Life by Bokusen), in which he further describes himself as pupil of Hokusai. This work is a fairly close imitation of the early volumes of the *Mangwa*, both in style, execution, and selection of subject. Of course it is inconceivable that the latter should not have been the first to appear; while the date of the former is undeniable. Moreover, it is distinctly stated in the preface to volume i. of the *Mangwa*,



that it was in the autumn of its appearance that Hokusai first made Bokusen's acquaintance ; so that the conclusion must be, that the date of the beginning of the work being necessarily earlier than 1815, we have no reason for rejecting the authenticity of that given above, December 1812.

The contents of the *Mangwa* are thus described in the advertisement of the tenth volume :

I. Here the author gives rein to his sense or humour in a variety of miscellaneous information. The work will be completed in due course.

II. Things omitted from volume i. ; men and women, plants, trees, landscapes, birds and beasts, fish, insects, and creeping things.

III. Continuation of II., miscellaneous contents, all sorts of things.

IV. Examples of rapid and extempore work (acrobatic art).

V. Torii, halls, pagodas, temples, court nobles, galleries, official buildings, priests' dwellings.

VI. Various modes of fencing, archery, gunnery, and everything pertaining to the honourable profession of arms.

VII. Landscapes under wind, rain, snow, rime in different provinces.

VIII. Supplementary to earlier volumes, also cultivation of silkworms, the different kinds of embroidery, &c.

IX. Chinese and Japanese heroes, and women famous for heroism or virtue.

X. Shrines, monasteries, Buddhism, necromancers, professors of occult arts, types of ordinary men and women.

These ten volumes constitute the chief portion of the work, and that most intimately associated with Hokusai personally. At some date after 1819, the blocks of those which had already appeared were bought by Yerakuya Toshirō of Nagoya, who published two more volumes in 1834, and an additional two in 1849, of which the latter was issued after the death of the artist. A fifteenth volume appeared after a considerable lapse of time; compiled from miscellaneous sketches left by Hokusai; but as there was not in existence enough material to fill it, and none of the pupils of Hokusai had survived, contributions were obtained from other artists of Nagoya: the most notable being Kyōsai, whose signature is attached to two plates. The contents of these later volumes hardly need particular description. They are of the same varied

nature as those which went before ; and, mainly, are executed with the same skill.

As a general rule, the fidelity with which Japanese wood-engravers have been able to reproduce drawings in facsimile is little less than extraordinary ; but the average copies met with of the *Mangwa* are disappointing in this respect. The blocks seem to have worn very rapidly ; and even in the best impressions, the result does not strike one as being entirely satisfactory. This is due to the printing, which must have been entrusted to hands far less able than those which made the delicate *surimono* and superb broadsheets. The tints of red and blue required careful gradation and most judicious handling, but seem only to have received much the same mechanical treatment that would have resulted from the use of a press. Probably the work was done very cheaply. The master's drawing is reproduced accurately enough. We can realise the fertility of his conceptions and his amazing dexterity of handling, his keen observation, his great good-humour, and the poignant wit of his art. And into these lines we can, at least, try to read the subtlety of light and shade that he desired to accompany them, and regret that his

original drawings were, by the exigencies of the process employed for perpetuating and disseminating them, of necessity destroyed.

Even at that, the work remains his masterpiece. And when we count up other series of designs accomplished by the great masters of the world's art—the woodcuts of Dürer, the etchings of Rembrandt and Whistler, the portraits of Holbein, the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner—we may not deny a place therewith to the *Mangwa* of Hokusai.





## CHAPTER III

### THE VIEWS OF MOUNT FUJI

**I**F any average student were asked what subject of all others was most characteristic of Japanese art his answer would almost infallibly, and very rightly, be Mount Fuji. This splendid peak, dominating the whole empire, has for centuries been accepted as an embodiment of the guardian spirit of Japan. The old legend is that it was cast up by the same convulsion of Nature that caused the formation of Lake Biwa, itself one of the greatest beauties of Japanese landscape. And around them both has grown a wealth of story, an infinite poesy, that has never failed to incite the emulation of the painter, the draughtsman, the decorator. On the most minute sword ornaments, its superb curves are exquisitely chiselled in iron and inlaid with gold or silver ; on great *kakemono*

the sweeping brush of the masters of painting have traced them in all their fine simplicity. It was inevitable that Hokusai, looking out upon his world with keen enjoyment of all that it offered to his artistic sense, should seize upon a subject so noble and so intensely patriotic. It was almost inevitable, moreover, that he, out-broken from all the trammels of his conventional predecessors, should be the first to realise its possibilities ; to mark the innumerable variations that it presented to him who would see them ; and, for the first time, depict them—not as images remote and separate, but in the most intimate relationship with the daily incidents of that ever-flowing current of human affairs which it was the highest aim of his school to record. It is this quality which especially enforces the appeal of all Hokusai's work to Europeans—incapable of understanding, and generally undesirous of appreciating, the subtle philosophy and symbolism underlying the compositions of the masters of the classical schools of Japan and China. And no better example can be found of the working out of this, his tendency, than in the seven-score odd drawings he had engraved and published of the Peerless Mountain.



THE FIRST KAKEMONO OF FUJI



The first with which we have to deal were produced between the years 1823 and 1829 under the title—so well known to Western amateurs—“The Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji,” *Fugaku Sanjiu-rokkei*, the artist being then well over sixty years of age. They are broadsheet, of about the usual size (14 inches in height by 10 in width), and are printed in several colours, a fine blue, apple-green, and dull rich red being predominant. The scheme of colour was absolutely Hokusai’s own, and it is somewhat singular to remark that, although he used it so freely (in other series as well as this), and although his popularity was so great and so enduring, it was never copied by other colour-print designers who attempted landscape; although a modification was used by one or two of his pupils. In spite of the title, the series really consists of forty-six plates, a list of them being given, in the Appendix, in the order chosen by the late E. de Goncourt.

The second series appeared in book form, filling three volumes. Its Japanese title is simply *Fugaku Hyakkei*, “The Hundred Views of Fuji,” and it was published, with a preface by Ryūtei Tanehiko (who performed the same office for the eleventh



volume of the *Mangwa* in 1834), in the handwriting of Tōsai, dated the fourth month of the fourth year of Tempō (May–June 1834). The cuts are in monochrome, black with a grey tint—one edition has black only—and there are 102 of them, including the frontispiece—a representation of a female deity, *Mokuge-Miraku-ya-hime-ho-mikoto*—the sublime goddess of flowers and trees. The two first volumes appeared in 1834–1835, signed by the artist *Gwakyō Rōjin Manji*; they were engraved by Yegawa Tomekichi and his pupils, and published by Nishimura of Yedo. The third is undated. It was engraved by Yegawa Sentaro, and published at Nagoya by Yerakua Tōshino. At Nagoya, also, was published the whole of the edition in black only, as well as a later one in tint. In addition to these, reference must be made to the admirable reprint arranged by Mr. F. V. Dickins (London : B. T. Batsford, 1880, 4 vols.), with full translations of the preface and descriptive titles.

The series is not a haphazard collection or sketches. It begins on a high note of religious mystery; the first plate being a representation of the Shintō goddess of flowers and trees—a deity closely allied to Amaterasu, the goddess of light.

She holds a mirror and a branch of the *sakaki* tree, and gazes downwards from the heavens in an attitude of beneficent meditation. Next we have the mountain itself, in all its splendid majesty ; the summit, snow-clad, rising with a mighty sweep beyond the bounds of the picture—a point of some significance. In the foreground is a group of villagers and officials wondering at the sight—for herein Hokusai represents the legendary birth of Fuji in the year B.C. 285. Then, again, comes a touch of mysticism—the Buddhist saint, Yen no Shōkaku, exorcising demons upon the very top of the mountain ; and so, reverently, the master brings us to one of his most superb compositions, “Fuji on a Bright Day.” The peak of the mountain rises, lone and afar, beyond a great expanse of hills, and lowlands, and lake upon which just a few tiny boats are placed, to bring into scale with mere humanity, the majesty of the subject. The sky is flecked with a ripple of shining clouds, more than rivalled in brightness by the snow that yet clothes the heights. The keynote of the theme is solitude ; and in no other view of the whole series do we get so grand a concentration of force on the expression of a single thought.

But when Hokusai has once rendered due honour

to the sublimity of his subject he gives full play to the restless vigour of his observation. We have seen the great mountain and its guardian spirits : now it is time to bring humanity upon the scene. With a perfection of fitness, the master chooses for the purpose the day of the commencement of the pilgrimage season ; and shows us a wooded ravine filled with pilgrims, toiling painfully upward. For the most part, only their great hats, marked with the proper cypher, can be seen—a characteristically humorous point of view to have been chosen—but, here and there, is a face, and a hand grasping the necessary staff. Again, we have the pilgrims, their task accomplished, striding down the cinderous slopes—then, a wonderful and almost grotesque rendering of the panic and devastation caused by the great earthquake and eruption of 1707 ; and so we pass into some of the innumerable intimacies of the Peerless Mountain, with the kindly folk who live around and adore it.

One cannot spare space for detailed consideration of these : moreover, the work has already been so well done by Mr. Dickins that a reiteration is needless. But one or two of the drawings claim a special word of comment. For instance, the



FUJI AT EVENING FROM BEYOND THE RYOGOKU BRIDGE





composition of No. XX. in vol. i., "Fuji mirrored in the Rice Marshes," with the flock of geese on the margin of the water, is daring and extraordinarily successful. In No. XXV. of the same volume, the sun is setting in glory, just behind the apex of the mountain ; and so revealing itself as a gigantic mirror and stand, but still more, to us, reminiscent of the national flag of Japan. In Plate III. of the second volume, Fuji, just lit by the rays of the rising sun, is seen, most beautifully, to glisten between the stems of a group of bamboos, waving in the morning breeze. Plate V. again has a note of mystery ; the snow-clad peak rising above the clouds that enshroud the dragon coiled about it. In Plate IX. it rises beyond the crest of one of those great waves that Hokusai loved to draw, and drew so magnificently ; and in XVI. is one of the rare portraits of the artist himself, with a picnic party on the edge of the rice-fields, painting his beloved mountain. Bridges and streets, storm and calm, crowds and solitude—over all Fuji rises supreme and wonder-compelling. The old priest (in XXIX. vol. ii.) leaves his writing to throw up his arms in admiration as he catches sight of the mountain in the round window beyond his desk. The lines or

Fuji mingle and contrast with the web of a spider, the mesh of a fishing-net, the look-out of a fireman rising above the village roofs. Artisans at their work, ambassadors journeying in ceremonial state, astronomers on their observatory roofs, all stay to admire its graceful outlines; until "with a last flourish of the brush, the master gives us, once more, the great cone, in simple loneliness, clouds and shadows gathering about its base."

The whole can only be described as a splendid epic—instinct with poetry and beauty and romance—and yet filled to the full with the keenest and most kindly humanity. It is rare to find such qualities allied with the complete powers of artistic expression: and if Hokusai had done no work other than these two series of views of Mount Fuji, his reputation would stand high among the artists of the world.\*

\* Hokusai is known also to have made a set of eight views of Mount Fuji (Revon, cxxxviii.), which appears, unfortunately, to have been lost; and he also contributed one illustration in colours to a collection of poems, *Fujimi-no-tsura*—"The Admirers of Fuji," signed *Gwakyōjin Hokusai* (Hayashi, 1711).

## CHAPTER IV

### OTHER PRINTS AND BOOKS

**H**OKUSAI produced many colour-prints other than the great series of "Views of Mount Fuji" already described. Among these were several sets of admirable landscape, in which, nevertheless, we almost always find a considerable human interest. His figures of men and women are more than mere counters in the scheme of composition ; even where the landscape, as such, is the dominant feature ; and in his treatment of them one marks the same kindly humour that is characteristic of his other work.

No complete list of these broadsheets has yet been compiled ; and indeed the task of making a complete catalogue of Hokusai's work would be an undertaking of great magnitude, in spite of the valuable contributions towards it, already accumulated by

the labours of MM. E. de Goncourt, Revon, and Hayashi. In the present work an attempt to deal with even the chief of them would be out of place ; but some brief indication may be given of the nature of a few of the best known and most characteristic.

Somewhat similar in general style to the coloured "Views of Mount Fuji" are a series of eleven "Picturesque Views of Famous Bridges in the Provinces." These are signed *Zen Hokusai Tamekazu*, and were published by the famous printseller, Yeijudō, of whom Toyokuni made an interesting portrait. The quaint lines of the old bridges of Japan, now fast disappearing under stress of the requirements of modern civilisation, appealed strongly to the artist. He took a keen delight in the contrasts afforded by these works of men's hands, with the mountains and rivers, highlands and lowlands, woods and plains in which nature expresses herself : and the combination is seen and rendered with daring and originality. One of the most typical of them is now reproduced ; and it affords a pleasant indication of Hokusai's methods. Not without deliberation has he introduced, on the rock at the right of the picture, a couple of goats ; one of which leaves for a moment the all-important

operation of grazing, in order to watch the success with which the two heavily laden coolies are emulating his own surefootedness in their perilous passage. All the details of the composition—the precipitous rocks and tree-tops just appearing above the mist, the flight of birds of one kind above, and of wild geese below the bridge, suggest the great height and danger of the hanging bridge. It is in this sense that all Hokusai's pictures must be studied to realise their allusiveness and imagery and the completeness and sincerity with which the artist enunciates his ideas. He inscribed this print, "Drawn from Nature."



A companion set is that of eight "Waterfalls of the Provinces," issued by the same publisher ; and to it, also, the above remarks fully apply. Both have the general colour-scheme of the Fuji series—apple-green, blue, reds and yellow being the prevailing tints. With them may also be grouped a publication by Moriyama, "Eight Views of the Riu-kiu (Loo-choo) Islands," in which the green and yellow are less predominant. Fine impressions

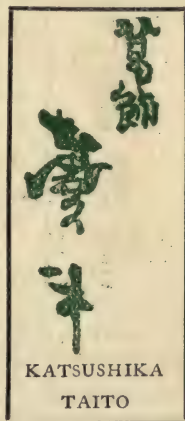


of these prints are rare. They have been frequently reprinted in crude colours, which do little justice to the artist.

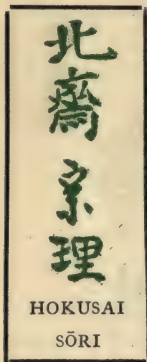
Another group consists of illustrations, mainly of the life of cities and suburbs. The earliest and most important of them is the well-known *Azuma Asobi* (Walks round the Eastern Capital); a series of views of Yedo, engraved by Andō Yenchi, with text by Sensō-an, and published by Tsutaya Juzaburō; a picture of whose shop, with stacks of prints, three assistants, and Tsutaya himself waiting on a customer, is not the least of the many interesting subjects therein contained. This publication contains, also, the famous view of the Dutchmen's quarters at Nagasaki, with Japanese passers-by in the street making fun of the curious foreigners behind the bars; a curious piece of evidence, were such wanted, of Hokusai's acquaintance with that town. In all respects, the spirit and evident accuracy of the drawings give to the book the importance of an historical document of the first class. Old Yedo (the modern Tōkyō) is now almost a thing of the past; and when the day comes for its history to be written, these sketches will be found to possess a high value apart from their worth as works of art.

The first edition of the *Azuma Asobi*, which is rare, appeared in 1797, and was printed in black only. In 1802 it was reprinted in colours ; and was followed by the *Tōto meisho ichiran* (Views on the Celebrated Quarters of Yedo), by the same engraver ; and, in 1806, by the *Yehon Sumidagawa riogan ichiran* (Views on both Banks of the Sumida River), with text by Senkwadō Tsuruya, and published by Kōjirō Narayasu.

An interesting, and often amusing, set of views of the Tōkaido—the old high road from Yedo to Kyōto—was published at the former city by Nishimura in 1798-1799. The fifty-six plates of the recognised halting-places are small in size, only about six and a half inches square ; but the landscape is of little importance : merely what one might call the symbol of each famous view being introduced in connection with humorous incidents of the journey. Hokusai made also another and larger set of views of this favourite subject, immortalised by the genius of the two Hiroshige, in



the succeeding generation. He also, in spite of the assertions of some writers to the contrary, made at least two series of illustrations of that splendid epic of Old Japan, the "Story of the Forty-seven Rōnin," with which, as we have seen, he claimed some ancestral connection. One belongs to his earlier period, and is signed Kakō, and is of little importance. A later version is better known and was printed by Idzumi Ichi.



Hokusai designed few *nishikiye*—the ordinary broadsheets—as compared with many of the other artists of his school; and those few on quite original lines. Perhaps the finest of them is a large-sized print representing a great fish working its way up a waterfall—the Japanese symbol of perseverance. This is a magnificent composition, and superb in colour. It is interesting to note that it was somewhat closely imitated both by the first Toyokuni and also by Keisai Yeisen; though neither succeeded in equalling the achievement of the master. Another notable print represents a carp in a whirlpool, the scheme being carried out in deep blues



A HERO





and green. This also has extraordinary merits as a decorative design—more so, in fact, than is usual with the work of the artist. A word of reference is also due to some singularly beautiful prints of flowers. Other prints can hardly be enumerated here. It must suffice to repeat that they are generally quite free from the conventions of Hokusai's contemporaries—often more akin to paintings, of which indeed they are rather transcripts, than drawings made for the special process of colour-printing. These works have nothing in common with the prints of Utamaro, Toyokuni, Yeishi and the rest, save in their technique. Here, as always, the great artist must needs follow a line of his own, regardless of the demands of the market or the custom of his fellows.

From the year 1781 to that of his death Hokusai continued, almost without interruption, to make illustrations for books of every kind—story-books, novels, poems, and a whole series of collections of designs and sketches other than the great *Mangwa* already dealt with. Most of these illustrations are reproduced in black-and-white, sometimes, especially in the case of the sketch-books, with the addition of one or two tints. They show, as one would expect,

daring and original powers of composition and draughtsmanship, with perhaps a greater insistence on mass and light shade than on the pure line and solid black used by earlier Japanese illustrators, such as Nishigawa Sukenobu. It is by no means difficult to obtain representative examples of them, although some are, of course, extremely rare. One would note, as especially worthy of study, in addition to those elsewhere referred to, the "Pictures of Chinese and Japanese Heroes," and the "Book of Birds"; but these give only a small measure of the infinite variety and capacity of the artist's powers as an illustrator.



## CHAPTER. V

### “SURIMONO”

**A**MONG Hokusai's colour-prints his splendid series of *surimono* will always have an especial charm for those who know and appreciate them. This class of colour-prints is, it may be noted, of a quite personal nature. They were made for particular occasions, such as the New Year, to announce the birth of a son, a change of name, or such-like occurrence calling for congratulations; and were often, though not quite always, issued by the artist as gifts, or supplied by him to a friend for that purpose. Thus one does not find on them the mark of a publisher. They seem to have been generally produced without any consideration for the exigencies of commerce; and, in spite of a somewhat restricted traditional treatment, they consequently reflect the designer's taste in a very marked degree. Moreover, it is in *surimono* that we see the technique of colour-printing at its best.

On them was lavished all the skill of the colourist and of the printer. Niceties of enrichment by what may be called blind tooling (*gauffrage*), the use of metallic powders, and every daintiness and refinement of colour, take the place of the broader effects of the larger prints. They are miniatures in every sense of the word, with an added charm of sentiment, which, however difficult for a European to realise, must still be allowed for in measuring their intrinsic value as works of art. Almost always they are allusive in subject, composed with symbols of good omen carefully chosen with the particular occasion in view. Very often the inscription is one of those little poems of which the Japanese are so enamoured, reproduced in that fine calligraphy on which they set so high a value. The sum total is a print, of which our Christmas and New Year's cards offer but the most remote reflection, and, be it remembered always, made for the delectation of the artisan class of the community.

Among the many artists who, during the seventy odd years that the fashion obtained in Japan, gave their attention to work of this kind, Hokusai is easily pre-eminent; and next to him come his pupils, Gakutei, Hokkei, Hokuba. According to

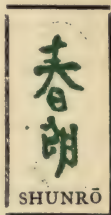


LAUNDRESS TEASED BY A MONKEY





M. Edmond de Goncourt, whose study of this branch of his art is the most complete that has yet appeared, his first known *surimono* is to be ascribed to the year 1793, and bears the signature Mugara Shunrō. It represents a young water-carrier seated on the yoke on which his vessels are carried, by the side of a small piece of furniture bearing pots of sugar, and bowls of porcelain and metal. It has no personal connection with Hokusai himself, having been made



to announce a concert in honour of a musician who was changing his name ; and it gives a list of the performers and the following invitation (translated from the French of M. de Goncourt), the date being July of the year above mentioned : “ In spite of the great heat, I hope that you are in good health, and I beg to inform you that my name is changed, thanks to my success with the public ; and that, to celebrate the inauguration of my new name, on the 4th day of next month I am giving a concert at the house of Kiōya of Ryōgoku, with the assistance of all my pupils, from ten in the morning until four o’clock in the afternoon ; and be the weather wet or fine, I count on the honour of a visit from you.—Tokiwazu Mozitayu.”

*Surimono* have been identified by M. de Goncourt with most of the succeeding years. These early examples—ranging up to 1804, a time of his greatest output—are, for the most part, small in size, about that of one of our playing-cards. They are very delicately executed in rose-pink, green, purple, yellow and brown; and most beautifully composed and drawn. The figures of the women, in particular, are remarkable for their exquisite grace of line; and the strong characterisation which distinguished the artist's later work only appears tentatively. The Japanese calendar associates years, months, and days with certain animals in a regular cycle; and chronological allusions to these are of common occurrence in the designs, and thus form a ready means of fixing the date. Some of them appeared in series; as, for instance, a set of representations of various industries (1799); the childhood of fifteen heroes (1800); the twelve animals of the zodiac (1801); and many other groups; while some few, of great beauty and rarity, are of large size—unusually wide in proportion to their height—and depict landscapes, picnics, and similar scenes. M. de Goncourt mentions one, in two sheets, which is 100 centimètres in width and the largest known;



WOMEN MAKING BANDANA WORK





the subject being a bridge with various passers-by, and among them, a figure, said to be a portrait of the artist himself.

Hokusai continued to produce *surimono* in considerable numbers up to about the year 1835, after which he appears to have neglected this class of work. M. de Goncourt remarks that in the year 1820 we have the curious phenomenon of a distinct display of influence derived apparently from one of his best pupils, Gakutei. The *surimono* of Hokkei, another disciple, are also closely related to his later style; of which a bolder colouring and design and the abandonment of that delicacy in both those qualities which marked the prints of the first group, are the chief characteristics. Many of these later *surimono* have been reprinted recently; and are to be met with in most collections. The original blocks seem generally to have been used; but the paper, artificially stained brown, and of coarse texture, is the best guide for the amateur, and this should generally be avoided unless the evidence of its authenticity and age is overwhelming. To this later period belong the series of still-life groups—always symbolic of good fortune for the special occasion—which the master arranged and drew with

singular skill. One series also (of the year 1823) has a particular and amusing interest. Toyokuni had, a little before, produced a deliberate plagiarism of the famous *Mangwa*. Hokusai retorted with a set of five *surimono* of actors in the manner of this artist ; and bearing this description : "I-itsu, the old man of Katsushika, playing the monkey-trick of imitating other people."

Reference has already been made to the excellence of the *surimono* of three of Hokusai's pupils—Hokuba, Gakutei, Hokkei. In different periods each of them equalled the master in execution ; though the inspiration in each case was his own. But the fact is notable, none the less ; for no other Japanese artist ever succeeded in attaining his level in any branch of art, even when the factor of originality is excluded. M. de Goncourt has published the most complete list of Hokusai's *surimono* yet made ; yet there are so many deficiencies therein that a collector who should care to specialise in this most fascinating branch of art would find that the investigation of it would afford him ample occupation. Such a task would be well worthy of the efforts of any one with time, patience, and skill enough to attempt it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PAINTINGS OF HOKUSAI

**I**N considering the work of Hokusai as a painter, it is first of all necessary to have a clear idea of the essential characteristics of the art of the brush as uniformly practised in Japan. For therein we find radical differences from European methods. The use of oils, or tempera, whether on canvas or panel, did not exist in the former country, save for some rare and sporadic manifestations of about the beginning of the seventeenth century, until the present generation began to imitate their Western contemporaries. The technique of Japanese, following that of the Chinese painters, demands for material only a kind of water-colour—sometimes approaching, in effect, to what we term *gouache* ; or, in its simplest form, just a monochrome of Indian ink. The brushes used

were round in section, tapering to a long point, and held perpendicularly to the silk or paper on which the drawings were made. In the majority of cases the former material was employed ; a choice demanding unerring accuracy of execution, inasmuch as correction was absolutely out of the question.

Trained from his boyhood in this technique, practically that of hand-writing, the Japanese painter needed, above all things, a perfectly clear idea of what he was going to do before he took his brush in hand. His subject had to be reduced, so to speak, to its simplest elements. There was no room for elaboration. On the contrary, his tendency was towards the perfection of a set of formulæ which, according to the tenets of the various schools, should express completely and simply the idea he wished to convey. The ruling motive of all Japanese art was concentration. To the expression of the one central thought, all subordinate or distracting detail was unhesitatingly sacrificed. Moreover, the themes of the painters were largely a matter of tradition. The tyranny of the masters seemed, until the intervention of European influences, as if it would be eternal and



A WARRIOR  
*(From an Original Drawing.)*



unrelenting. When Hokusai dared to paint in a style of his own, he was expelled from the studio. Because he persisted in working out his own salvation he has never been received into the hierarchy of Japanese art, save as a concession to European fashion—for reasons hardly understood and probably despised, could the truth be told—by Japanese critics.

The whole matter, then, becomes one of mere calligraphy. Line, and the quality of it, is everything in all the Japanese schools, save that of the Buddhistic tradition, and even in these it has power. In the style affected by Hokusai—a blend of those of the Chinese and Kano schools—colour and mass play but a subordinate part. There is no light and shade, as we understand the terms, and but little modelling. Against these deficiencies is to be set an amazing dexterity of brush-work, which in Hokusai's hands degenerated—as the Japanese critics would have it—to mere juggling uncontrolled. His mastery of the tools of his trade was such that he rose supreme to them. A stick, a piece of wood, the feet of a cock were sufficient for his need. He was—if one may be forgiven a parallel from another art of our side of the world—the Paganini of Japanese painting.

But from the caligraphic point of view the Japanese critics hold that his work lacks refinement. It is that of an imperfectly educated man : coarse, clumsy, without taste. Moreover, he was indeed a realist. The old painters, even of the so-called Naturalistic sects, learned not from Nature, but from tradition. Hokusai tried to see for himself, and how great was the task is seen by his own words : " At the age of six," said he, " I had a fancy for reproducing form ; for fifty years I made many book illustrations, but even at seventy I had little skill. Only when I reached the age of seventy-three did I begin to understand how rightly to represent animals, birds, insects, fish, plants. At ninety I shall be better ; at a hundred I shall be sublime ; at a hundred and ten I shall give life to every line, to every dot. Let no one mock at these words ! " There was no false humility in these sayings. They are the plain truth as he, above all others, realised it. And they crystallise for us the splendid courage, the unfailing confidence with which the artist hailed his old age as the messenger—not of failing powers and weakness—but of wider intelligence and perfected accomplishment. He knew that he had but the span of his

own life to attain that which had occupied generations of his predecessors. He failed, but with so magnificent an effort as covered him with eternal glory. But his failure and his knowledge of it was proclaimed in the infinite pathos of his dying words: "If Fate had given me but five years more——"

There are but few of his paintings available for the study of Western critics, and it is hard to deal with them as one may with the works of a European painter. Generally, as will have been gathered from the foregoing notes, they represent single figures—warriors or deities, birds, animals, groups of fruit, and the like, drawn with splendid force and precision and tinted—sometimes lightly and sometimes with deep, rich masses of colour. Hokusai has suffered greatly from his imitators, and only a small proportion of the drawings bearing his name can justly be attributed to him. In judging one of these, one must accept only the best. The superficial characteristics of his style were easy to reproduce, and two at least of his pupils, Teisai Hokuba and Hokkei, come very near to the master therein. But by Hokusai himself is to be found nothing which is not of the best, and our standard, in justice



A HERO WRITING A POEM





to him, must therefore be of the most rigid. The "old man mad with painting" loved his art far too well to do bad work.

Hokusai founded no enduring school. While he lived his pupils followed more or less closely in his footsteps, but lost the trail as soon as the great inspiration of his personality was removed. He stood apart also from the other men of the Ukiyoe School—apart from and above them. His one successor—who owed nothing to the direct teaching of the master—was the wild and turbulent genius, Kyōsai, an artist who, had he possessed Hokusai's intense and consuming devotion to art alone, to the exclusion of all other interests and passions, might very nearly have equalled his great predecessor.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ARTIST AND THE MAN

**I**T is not a little difficult to place Hokusai rightly in the hierarchy of art. He stands in solitude, both as regards his compatriots and the artists of other nations. But his position in the eyes of Japanese connoisseurs has been much misunderstood, and a correct statement of it will not only be serviceable in solving the greater problem, but affords a singularly interesting illustration of a curious and instructive phase of the social life of Japan.

The secret of the whole matter is revealed by the sign that Hokusai himself affixed to his dwelling—*Hachiyemon, Peasant*. He was always, consciously and proudly, an artisan ; a member of the Lower Order in the social scale. He was poor all his life, in spite of the not inconsiderable earnings

of his brush. He dwelt among the poor and lived as they did. They were his chief clients. His pupils were drawn from the same class. Hokkei, one of the greatest of them, was an itinerant fish-seller before he became an artist. Too much stress has been laid by some writers on his appearance before the Shogun, but this must not be interpreted in the sense of involving a serious recognition of his powers on the part of the aristocracy. The incident was merely a casual patronage of an unusually clever entertainer; for his dexterity in the making of gigantic or minute drawings was probably only looked upon as something akin to the feats of a juggler. The democracy of Japan had its own school of artists, realists in sentiment, if not altogether in the convention by which it was expressed. The subjects it treated were altogether vulgar and despicable in the eyes of the educated and refined Japanese, and the manner of drawing them was considered somewhat coarse and illiterate—the calligraphic standard of excellence being always, be it remembered, the final test of draughtsmanship.

We care for none of these refinements. Hokusai's sympathy with and appreciation of mere humanity, in its everyday phases, appeals to us in his favour.

We do not realise the great gulf that existed between the old feudalism of Japan and the masses which lived, happily enough, on the whole, under its sway. We do not understand the subtleties of Japanese higher art criticism. And so, while many Europeans have gone immeasurably astray in their estimate of Hokusai's rank in the art of Japan ; in that of the world which is over and beyond all local cults and criticisms, all racial, political, or geographical limitations, we set him, rightly, among the greatest.

It is a habit of critics, justifiable when used in moderation, to gauge the worth of one man by comparing him with another. Logically, this process is not of great value, since it assumes an estimate of the second which may not be generally acceptable. Yet in this case some enlightenment as to certain qualities of both may follow, and, at all events, the particular comparison is new, so far as I know.

The one artist who appears to me to have the closest kinship with Hokusai, in certain phases of his work, is the great French draughtsman, Honoré Daumier. Both were caricaturists, though from standpoints very different. Hokusai's exaggeration

of the human face and figure is inspired by pure joyousness. It is, quite simply, fun ; and has nothing in common with the bitter and biting satire of the French artist. Neither does Hokusai, in spite of the hardship and sorrow of his life, ever depict the seamy or pathetic side of humanity. One of the invariable and most beautiful of his characteristics is an unceasing happiness, a feature not far removed from that which inspired the best period of Greek art. But in method these two otherwise dissimilar geniuses come much more nearly together. Daumier worked mainly with soft, easily flowing lithographic chalk. His line has much of that calligraphic quality which all Japanese connoisseurs admire and all Japanese artists strive for. In his interpretation of the figure by this means he has, like Hokusai, a fine disregard of non-essentials and the keenest eye for those salient points that compel the instant recognition and admiration of the beholder. Allowing for the wide difference of what may be termed national conventions, the two artists come very closely together in their treatment of similar subjects, much more so than probably appears at first sight. Both are masters of the art of expressing their minds with a few poignant



strokes of brush or pencil. Stripped of the disguise imposed on each by the traditions which dominated him, their work, in its technique altogether, and partly in its application to the scenes and events of daily life, seems to me to rest largely on a common basis.

Hokusai's output was enormous. Only for the few and brief intervals when absolute destitution interrupted it, did his production cease during the seventy odd years of his working life. And it must be remembered that he finished his drawings and paintings at lightning speed. The Japanese artist never spends half a year or more on the slow and laboured building up of one picture. When he is ready to paint—when the idea is formulated and crystallised in his mind—the execution is a matter of minutes. And Hokusai was extraordinarily facile, even by the measure of his compatriots. Moreover, his invention was inexhaustible. Practically he never repeated himself. Many of the Japanese artists of the formal schools are altogether lacking in this respect. They rarely departed from the themes that they had prescribed for themselves, or that their masters had formulated for them. This, too, is a point that appeals to Western critics,



DESIGN FOR A LANTERN-HOLDER

and raises Hokusai in their eyes, though in those of the Japanese it hardly helps his credit.

It has already been explained that in Japan Hokusai is not an artist of the first rank. He is indeed at the head of his school, but the school is that of the lowest repute. The fact that he, in the practice of his art, rose infinitely beyond the standard of his fellows has not removed the prejudice attaching to them. The painters of Japan—apart from those of the *Ukiyo-ye* School—were professedly idealists. Realism, as we understand the word, was to them evidence of a lack both of imagination and of culture. Their abstractions were formulæ for the expression of poetic, literary or religious ideas, and the portrayal of scenes of everyday life was inherently vulgar. One has no right altogether to deny one's sympathy to this point of view. There are more things in its favour than would at first sight appear. For the *Ukiyo-ye* artists, it must be admitted, did not, as a class, paint Nature as do our realists. Their subjects were largely derived from the stage (which was not only neglected, but actively despised in all its ways by the upper classes of society), and from the singing-girls and the courtesans. With these they would

burlesque the time-honoured histories and customs of the aristocracy, and so gained a reputation for absolute vulgarity. The heroes, the famous scenes of their country's story, the processions of nobles before which they still had to abase themselves by the wayside: all are represented, in some of the best of the colour-print work, by courtesans. We, in our happy ignorance, miss the point of these beautiful pieces of craftsmanship, but we should remember, and allow for, the fact that to the eye and taste of a refined Japanese gentleman they could hardly be less than abhorrent.

By this admeasurement, even, Hokusai stands above his fellows. For him these tawdry artificialities counted little when weighed with the realities of human life and the beauties of Nature that his unwearied eyes loved to gaze upon. In his mature years he followed neither the convention of his academic predecessors nor the practice of his compatriots. He was, indeed, a realist—free, unfettered, and a law unto himself. And it is in virtue of his great humanity, as well as of the splendour of his gift of artistry that, in our eyes, he ranks with the masters of the world's art.

Not less is his rank as a man: such a one as

Thomas Carlyle, of all writers, would have loved to write of. His single-minded devotion to his art, his wit, his kindliness, the unfailing respect he exacted—not for himself, but for his calling—all these are qualities belonging to a character of the noblest. Hokusai made many friends. His sayings have been cherished and his memory kept green in a manner which none of the contemporaries of his class have earned. Such glimmerings of light as fall upon the lives of some of these—Utamaro, Yeisen, one of the Hiroshige, for instance—show them to have been men of a moral stamp sufficiently far removed from that of the Spartan old philosopher whose one fault would dimly appear to have been improvidence—or perhaps unreasoning generosity. The titles he chose for his prints prove him to have had no slight feeling for poetry, were any further proof required than that furnished by the prints themselves. His epitaph translates easily into our idiom, for all the world to read—"Here lies Hokusai, a famous artist—honest and true."





A POET PRESENTING HIS WORKS



## APPENDIX

TRANSLATIONS of the titles of the "Hundred Views of Mount Fuji" have been published by Mr. F. V. Dickins. M. E. de Goncourt, M. Hayashi, and M. Revon have furnished versions in French of those of most of his known books, and of many *surimono* and other prints. By way of giving additional help to collectors, the following renderings are now set forth—compiled mainly from material collected by M. Bing, and from the catalogue of the collection of Japanese Colour Prints in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

### I. THE THIRTY-SIX VIEWS OF MOUNT FUJI

*Note.*—As explained in chapter iii. there are really forty-six of this series. The titles are given in De Goncourt's order, which is now generally accepted by collectors.

- 1 Yejiri (Suruga). A puff of wind.
- 2 Ono-shinden (Suruga). Oxen hauling wood.
- 3 Katakura (Suruga). The tea-fields; a man shoeing a horse.
- 4 Fujimi-no-hara (Owari). A cooper making an irrigation tank.
- 5 Koishikawa (Yedo). Snow; a woman pointing at Mount Fuji to a group in a tea-house.

- 6 Todo-no-Ura. Torii and gatherers of shell-fish.
- 7 Fuji from Minobugawa. Horses on the river bank.
- 8 Fine weather and a south wind. Mount Fuji a rich red against a deep blue sky, with trails of snow at the peak ; and clouds behind.
- 9 Storm at the foot of the mountain.
- 10 Ascent by pilgrims.
- 11 Narumi (Kazusa). A large boat.
- 12 Ushibori (Hitati). A large boat, of which only half is seen.
- 13 Lake Suwa (Shinano). A hut under a tree.
- 14 Yamanaka (Tōtomi). Sawyers at work on a great baulk of timber.
- 15 Onden. The water-wheel.
- 16 Inume-tōgai (Kahi). Mount Fuji, with snow-covered peak, deep red base, and blue between.
- 17 Sansaka (Kahi). Mount Fuji reflected in the lake.
- 18 The pass of Mishima (Kahi). A great cedar whose trunk is being measured by three men.
- 19 Dawn at Isawa (Kahi).
- 20 Kanagawa on the Tōkaidō. The great wave, with Mount Fuji in its hollow.
- 21 Hodogawa on the Tōkaidō. The bridge of boats in snow.
- 22 Yoshida on the Tōkaidō. Tea-house.
- 23 Kanaya on the Tōkaidō. A litter carried over a ford.
- 24 The strand at Togo near Yeijiri on the Tōkaidō.
- 25 Yenoshima (Sagami) island.
- 26 Nakabara (Sagami). Coolies near a Buddhist monument.
- 27 Shitiri-ga-hama (Sagami). A cluster of trees.
- 28 The lake of Hakone (Sagami).
- 29 Minesama (Sagami). A flock of geese.
- 30 Tatekawa in the Honjō Quarter of Yedo. The district of the timber merchants.
- 31 The Mannen-bashi (bridge) at Fukugawa, Yedo.

- 32 The pagoda of the Five Hundred Rakan, Yedo.  
Sightseers on the terrace.
- 33 The great pine-tree of Aoyama, Yedo.
- 34 Kajika-sawa (Kahi). Also called Itchi-butchi-sawa.  
Fisherman casting a net from an overhanging ledge  
of rock.
- 35 Meguro district, Yedo.
- 36 Senju district, Yedo. Shoeing a horse with straw.
- 37 Fuji from the town of flowers (Yoshiwara) of Senju.
- 38 Tsukuda-shima. An island at the mouth of the  
Sumida river, with a boat loaded with cotton.
- 39 The Tamagawa (river), Musashi. Small boat loaded  
with drinking-water.
- 40 Fuji from Shinagawa at Yedo.
- 41 Fuji from the Nihonbashi (bridge) at Yedo.
- 42 The shops of Mitsui at Yedo.
- 43 Surugadai at Yedo. A hill in the centre of the city,  
with coolies.
- 44 The Buddhist Temple Hongwanji at Asakusa, Yedo.  
Workmen repairing the gable.
- 45 Evening and the Ryo-goku Bridge, Yedo.
- 46 The village of Sekuja on the Sumida river. Three  
horsemen.

## II. THE FAMOUS WATERFALLS

Round the waterfalls in various provinces. Signed  
Zen Hokusai Tamekazu. 8 prints. (Printer's  
seal, Yeijudō.)

- 1 Aoi-ga-oka cascade, Yedo.
- 2 Rōben waterfall in the Oyama mountain (Sagami  
province) with bathers.
- 3 Kirifuri cascade in Nikkō.
- 4 Yōrō waterfall in Mino province.
- 5 Amida waterfall, near the Kiso road.
- 6 Ono waterfall, on the Kiso road.



- 7 Kiyotaki cascade at Saka-no-Shita on the Tōkaidō.
- 8 Yoshitsune Uma-arai cascade (cascade where Yoshitsune's horse was washed), in Yoshino mountain.

### III. THE FAMOUS BRIDGES

Picturesque views of famous bridges in several provinces. Signed Zen Hokusai Tamekazu. 11 prints. (Printer's seal, Yeijudō.)

- 1 A suspension bridge between the two provinces, Hi and Etsu (The Monkey-Bridge)
- 2 Fukui bridge in the Echizen province.
- 3 Yatsubashi, in the Mikawa province; from an old picture.
- 4 View of Tempōzan, with two bridges at the entrance of the Aji river in Osaka.
- 5 Temma bridge in Osaka.
- 6 A bridge near Ashikaga.
- 7 Taiko (drum) bridge at Kameido, Yedo.
- 8 Kintai bridge in Suō province.
- 9 Yahage bridge at Okazaki.
- 10 Togetsu bridge at Arashi-yama, near Kyōtō.
- 11 Bridge of boats at Sano in Kōzuke province; from an old picture.

### IV. THE VIEWS OF OSAKA

Famous views of Osaka. 20 prints.

- 1 Sunrise at Sakura-no-miya. The early morning mist at Ajima.
- 2 Kawasaki; the return of the wild ducks.
- 3 The swallows of Watashiba with children flying kites at Bungobashi.
- 4 Cherry-blossom at Matsunoshita and peach-blossom at Tsukiji.

- 5 The Temmabashi in late spring ; and mirage at Higashitemma.
- 6 Arrival of a ferry-boat at Hachiken-Ya and green vegetable market at Ichinokawa.
- 7 The crowd at Temmei Bridge : a school-boy's visit to Temmei Tenjin.
- 8 Fishing at Ajikawa.
- 9 The cry of the cuckoo in the rainy season of the 5th month at Higashi-bori.
- 10 The castle of Osaka.
- 11 The summer moon at Kōrai bridge.
- 12 Fireflies at Kinsōba when the evening bell rings from the Horikawa Temple.
- 13 The song of the crickets at Tahei bridge ; with the fishermen of Kitahama.
- 14 Fireworks at Naniwa bridge.
- 15 The beginning of a storm at Yamazaki : autumn evening, Nishitemma.
- 16 River fog at Funairi bridge.
- 17 Dragon-flies at Nakanoshima.
- 18 "Urabon" scene at Oye bridge, Hojima, in the beginning of autumn. ("Urabon" is a Buddhist feast of Hindu origin, on the 13th-16th days of the 7th month, when offerings are made to deceased ancestors.)
- 19 Feast of Jizō at Yoriba ; a procession of children with images of Jizō, and a seller of insects (Higoshima).
- 20 Moonlight on Watanabe bridge.

## V. THE VIEWS OF YEDO

Views of Yedo and the neighbourhood. A set of 21 prints.

- 1 Shinagawa. A refreshment stall with a view of Yedo Gulf.

- 2 Umeyashiki. Plum-garden.
- 3 Asakayama. Picnic in the season of cherry-blossoms.
- 4 Kameido; the Temple of Tenjin : famous for wistaria flowers. A Shinto priest with a votive offering, speaking to a sweeper.
- 5 Sacred procession at the festival of Fukagawa Hachima Temple.
- 6 The Nihon-bashi. The Uwogashi (Fish-market).
- 7 Part of the procession at the festival of Sannō Temple, burlesquing the suite of the Corean Envoy.
- 8 Tenjin Temple at Yushima.
- 9 Shinobazu Lake. Gathering lotus-leaves used for enfolding offerings to departed souls at the "Bon" festival (7th month).
- 10 Sumida river. Women enjoying the cool breeze.
- 11 The Yoshiwara on the 1st day of the 8th month, when all the courtesans wear white.
- 12 Enjoying the cool air beneath Ryōgoku bridge.
- 13 A crowd at the Shimmei Temple, Shiba. Every one buys there raw ginger, and steel for use with flints.
- 14 Visit to Homyōji Temple at Zojigawa, and to Myōhoji Temple at Horinuchi about the 13th day of the 10th month; the anniversary of the death of Nichiren (A.D. 1282), founder of the Hokki sect.
- 15 Temple of Kanda Myojin. A boy seven years of age, being invested for the first time in a man's garments.
- 16 Meguro Temple devoted to the deity Fudō.
- 17 The steps leading to the Atago Temple.
- 18 Woji Temple. The scene of a festival held on the day of the Horse in the 2nd month.
- 19 The last day's Fair at Asakusa Temple.
- 20 Theatre at Sakai street.
- 21 Snow scene at Mimeguri.

## VI. THE SMALL TŌKAIDŌ

Tōkaidō go-yu-san-tsugi. The Fifty-three stages of the Tōkaidō road. 56 prints.

- 1 Nihonbashi, Yedo, near Uwoogashi (Fish-market).
- 2 Shinagawa. A brothel.
- 3 Kawasaki. A ferry.
- 4 Kanagawa. An entertainment with Geisha.
- 5 Hodogawa. Fish-reservoir.
- 6 Totsuka. A large Buddha image.
- 7 Fujisawa. Coast near Yenoshima islet.
- 8 Hiratsuka. An entrance to a temple.
- 9 Oiso. A stone called Torakoishi. The famous Oiso-no-Tora, a courtesan (13th cent.) is said to have metamorphosed herself into this stone : some say that this stone is so called because its shape resembles a "trepang" (Torako).
- 10 Odawara. A stall for resting.
- 11 Hakone. Ladies in palanquin.
- 12 Mishima. A temple. Postmen running.
- 13 Numadzu. A palanquin resting.
- 14 Haras. Corean Envoy and his suite wondering at the Mount Fuji.
- 15 Yoshiwara. Preparing white wine.
- 16 Kambara. Making salt.
- 17 Yui. A Chinese writing a "Gaku" to Sei-ken-dō temple.
- 18 Okitsu. Pine forest at Mio.
- 19 Yejiri. A palanquin-bearer and a horse-driver out of work.
- 20 Fuchū. A house of bad repute.
- 21 Mariko. Preparing broth.
- 22 Okabi. Discharging a hackney-horse.
- 23 Fujiyeda. Travellers (to the left) and pilgrims (to the right).

- 24 Shimada. River-waders. A river-wader asking to be hired by a passenger, who can only cross the river Oi on his shoulders.
- 25 Kanaya. Scene of the river Oi.
- 26 Nissaka. Ascending the slope.
- 27 Kakegawa. Huge kites, for which this district is renowned.
- 28 Fukoroi. Passengers, a Priest, and a Pilgrim.
- 29 Maisaka. Embarking to cross Imagiri gulf. Imagine means "New Cut"; it was formerly a lake, but became a gulf by a land-slip, A.D. 1499.
- 30 Arai. Barrier-gate, and officers examining the passports.
- 31 Shirasuka. A group of passengers.
- 32 Futagawa. A horse-driver shoeing his horse.
- 33 Yoshida. A long bridge called Toyohashi.
- 34 Goyu. A mound dedicated to a deity called Kōshin.
- 35 Akasaka. A macaroni house.
- 36 Fujikawa. A woman on a hackney-horse.
- 37 Hamamatsu. A lotus-pond.
- 38 Mitsuke. A spear-bearer waiting for his master, a "Samurai."
- 39 Akazaki. A procession of a "Daimyō."
- 40 Chirifu. A boy meeting a huge carp.
- 41 Narumi. Famous for stencil-work. Here a shop for its sale is painted.
- 42 Miya. Ferry-boats.
- 43 Kawana. Baking clams.
- 44 Yokkaichi. Ise pilgrims, who travel to the Temple of Ise, by charities.
- 45 Ishiyakushi. The renowned "Ushiwaka" cherry-tree.
- 46 Shōno. Boys driving a bull.
- 47 Kameyama. Travellers resting in a tavern.
- 48 Seki. Passengers in snow.
- 49 Sakanoshita. A "Komuso" (warrior-mendicant) speaking with a girl.



- 50 Isuchiyama. Azalea-flowers.
- 51 Minakuchi. A tavern ; selling sea-weed jelly.
- 52 Kusatsu. A passenger, a hackney-driver, and a begging soldier.
- 53 Ishibe. Passengers on a drawbridge.
- 54 Otsu. A fountain.
- 55 Kyōto. Emperor's procession.
- 56 Imperial court.



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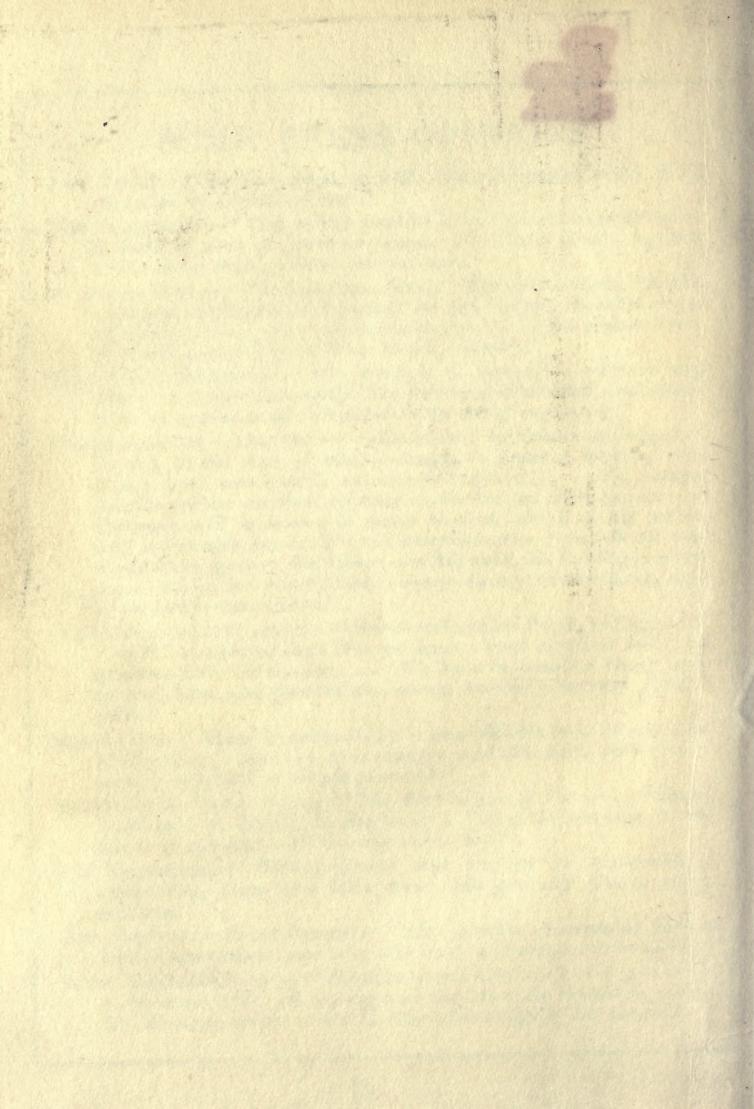
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